

DJ perseveres despite handicap

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Staff writer

Radio personality Henry James “Hank” Ochs is a proud part of Ohlone’s radio station, 89.3 KOHL. Ochs is a 41 year old autistic who dreams of becoming an all-around professional. He has been in Ohlone since Sept. 2007 and has taken quite a number of broadcasting classes. Ochs has already received an On Air Talent Certificate and a Radio Studio Operator Certificate. He is currently taking the Radio Operations class with Tom Briseno and a Radio Broadcasting class with Steve Taylor. According to Ochs, despite passing with an A Taylor’s class, he is retaking it to improve his annunciation.

Ochs said, “[Ohlone classes] teach me well. I like it better here because when I was at Chabot they had term pots and carts [as opposed to the] wonderful computers they have here in Ohlone.”

Ochs is truly passionate about his dream and works hard at it. Briseno said, “There has never been anyone as dedicated, enthusiastic and focused as Hank. Radio is his life. He’s unique and he’s a good guy. We like him around here.” Ochs is so passionate about radio that he listed it as one of his top hobbies and interests along with music and baseball.

Ochs has a lot of experience in radio. He did everything he could to achieve his goals. Ochs was a promotion intern for 14 years in KYLD WiLD 94.9. He was also a part of known disc jockey, JV’s former morning show. The show was entitled The Dog House where Hank interviewed people, made some prank calls, and stunts. The show was terminated in April 2005 but Ochs continued on with his pursuit to become a radio personality.

He had the Lounging with Hammerin’ Hank Show where he did production pieces. Bob Dochterman said, “I think it’s appropriate to call him a novelty contributor [in that show,] but we think he can take on regular mainstream radio.” Dochterman added that “[Hank] represents another unique set of challenges [and] radio is probably the most severe environment for an autistic person.”

Ochs responded, “I’m kind of comfortable with it but sometimes it’s hard.”



Photo by Inez Black

Radio personality ‘Hammerin’ Hank’s’ motto: ‘Never give up.’

To keep up with his health issues, Ochs sees a doctor and is currently on a diet. He explained that being off the air for WiLD in Aug. 2008 made him depressed and he went on an eating spree.

Even Ochs was proud to say that he still went to KOHL and attended class regularly. He was happy, though, when JV brought him back on-air where listeners from all over San Francisco know him as The Worlds Most Lovable Autistic.

Ochs’s dream started when he was a young boy, even before he went to school. According to Briseno, “[Ochs] sister once told me that Hank used to pretend he was on-air on the radio while holding up a hair brush as his microphone.” Now Ochs is also the co-producer and host of the Hammerin’ Hank Music Video Show which shows Mondays at 9:30 p.m. on Comcast cable

channel 29 for Fremont, channel 27 for Newark, and soon to come in Hayward on channel 28.

Ochs admires many people; JV for inspiring him to do radio the correct way, Christie James and Jon Manuel for being so intelligent and Briseno who taught him all he knows on how to run boards on KOHL.

Ochs has already come a long way and will stop at nothing. He will continue to achieve his goals and will be on KOHL until someone officially hires him which he hopes will be soon.

He is hoping to be put on payroll from his current intern position at WiLD as soon as the economy stabilizes.

Ochs’s advice to everyone including those who have disabilities is “Never give up! Always work on your goals even if you’re autistic.”